HUMAN ANIMAL SUPPORT SERVICES

Collecting Better Intake Reasons Data

Overview

Understanding the circumstances that lead to pets entering shelters is a crucial step in identifying opportunities to support pet owners in your community and make strategic decisions that reduce the need for intake. Thus far, shelters have focused their data tracking to inform decision making of processes happening within the shelter walls. As shelters seek to understand the *why* behind increased pet intake to develop preventative measures, we must also reevaluate the information being collected at and before intake that can inform our strategies for keeping more pets and people together.

Intake reasons data entry captures the circumstances leading to a pet coming into a shelter. Using this information, animal welfare organizations can effectively allocate resources, expand programming, develop policy, and implement targeted interventions aimed at reducing shelter intake.

Sample Intake Reasons

This [sample intake reasons list](#) can be used to update or create intake reasons for your shelter. This list was created using research, shelter focus groups, and integrates knowledge from leading animal welfare national organizations and subject matter experts.

Collecting Intake Data

Intake reasons should be collected in the following situations:

- **Owner Surrender For Human Reasons**: When owners voluntarily relinquish their pets to the shelter due to various reasons such as financial constraints, moving, or personal circumstances.
- **Owner Surrender For Behavioral Reasons**: Pets surrendered due to behavioral problems that owners cannot manage or resolve.
- **Owner Surrender For Health Issues**: Pets surrendered because of medical issues that owners cannot afford to treat.
- **Owner Surrender For End of Life**: Cases where owners surrender elderly or terminally ill pets.

- **Owner Surrender For Emergency Situations**: Animals affected by natural disasters, emergencies, or accidents.
- **Found/Lost Pet**: When someone finds a lost pet and brings it to the shelter.

Software Considerations

Shelter software offers various ways to collect this information through subtypes and intake reasons fields that may offer multi-select options to capture all contributing factors or a single primary reason. Work with your shelter software representative to find the best way to track this information in your organization's software.

Intake Triage

In the event shelter software does not provide a sufficient framework to collect comprehensive intake data, an intake survey may be created using free tools such as Google Forms. In addition to collecting data, a conversational approach is a critical part of collecting better intake data and creating a client-centric atmosphere.

This **intake triage guide** can help get you started.